

# Extensional Characteristics Study of Mental Cultivation

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Yingying ZHANG: Design specific research plans, conduct experiments and draft papers.

Shihua HUANG: Put forward the research viewpoint: the extensional characteristics of mind cultivation can be divided into dimensions. Research method: based on grounded theory.

Yunyi JIANG: Responsible for access information collection.

## Abstract

**Objective:** In order to consolidate the level of peoples spiritual cultivation in China, experts of philosophy of mind and TCM in the Ming Dynasty in Lingnan area were interviewed with a self-made interview outline to investigate the extended characteristics of spiritual cultivation in the form of interviews and online voice interviews, in order to make preliminary preparations for the development of the scale of mental cultivation accomplishment. **Methods:** In LingNan region of Ming dynasty study experts and TCM experts (a total of 8) as the interview consulting object, using the homemade interview outline, to interview and online voice interview, the study of mental characteristics, and adopt the qualitative analysis software Nvivo20 to analyze the interview manuscripts, based on root theory research, after open coding, selective coding and theoretical coding steps, the important extension characteristics of mental cultivation is analyzed. **Results:** Construct the basic structure system of five stages of inner cultivation, less desire, firm will, pledge virtue and true happiness, and laying the foundation for further establishing the theoretical system of mental cultivation. The analysis of the cognition of mind cultivation in different professional directions shows that the average number of connections between 5 interviews with TCM experts and selective coding is 10.4, and the average number of connections between 3 interviews with experts of philosophy of mind and selective coding is 15.3. The content of reference points of experts in different professional directions has different proportions in the characteristics of mental cultivation. The difference between the

two major directions is the most obvious in the distribution of reference points of pledge virtue characteristics, experts in TCM accounted for 15.37% and experts in philosophy of mind accounted for 84.63%. In terms of emotional tone, it has the following characteristics. The five-stage coding emotion is dominated by neutral tone, with the overall neutral tone accounting for 67.1%, and the neutral tone inside the node accounting for more than 60%, among which the reference point of neutral tone inside pledge virtue accounts for the largest proportion, accounting for 79.5%; The overall proportion of reference points of positive and negative emotional tone is close, accounting for 12.4% and 11.7% respectively; The overall mixed tone reference point accounts for 8.9%. **Limitations:** There is little research on the cultivation of mind and nature, and the theoretical basis of the research is not solid enough. There may be a misunderstanding deviation in the second interpretation of the interview contents of eight experts in the process of deconstruction. The connotation definition of mental cultivation is based on the theory of philosophy of mind in Ming Dynasty and TCM, and the future research direction of mental cultivation is relatively limited to these two fields. **Conclusion:** In the five stages of inner cultivation, less desire, firm will, pledge virtue and true happiness is generally step by step, and there are certain internal crossover and mutual influence.

### **Key words**

Physical and mental cultivation; Qualitative research; Interview; Psychology of TCM; Philosophy of mind

## **1 Introduction**

The Philosophy of Mind and Soul is an important concept in philosophy (Hu, 1993), and is the study of moral practice from the inner mind (Mou, 2005). It mainly discusses the fundamental principle of human existence. In the philosophical thoughts of all ethnic groups (including eastern and western cultures), there are rich viewpoints on the study of mind, such as the existential philosophy of western culture, Christian theology and other religious philosophical thoughts. In the research field of China's ancient philosophy of life, the related viewpoints of the theory of mind and nature are

more widely distributed, including Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, which also exists in the philosophy of TCM. The nature of mind in Chinas traditional philosophy mainly talks about mind from the perspective of its transcendence and spiritual growth(Gao,2015).Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism came into being simultaneously after the Tang and Song Dynasties, and gradually showed the trend of three religions in one (Liu, 1996). Buddhism turned from the Zen revolution and Taoism to the whole truth, and Confucianism changed greatly in Yangming, but its ideological interest in the transformation was still not more than the word mind. The three doctrines were interlinked in meaning and principle, and the common ground was centripetal. Confucianisms theory of good and evil, Buddhisms theory of purity, Taoisms theory of dynamic and static, and the relationship between heaven and man in TCM are not exactly the same. If we grasp the purpose of the same goal from the core spirit, all of them will return to mind (Bai, 2014). At the same time, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism all talk about the transcendental mind from the metaphysical point of view, instead of talking about the Tao from the outside. They don't regard Tao as an existence independent of the human heart, and think that the human heart is connected with the Heaven, and the Heaven exists because it is inherent in people and in the heart. The idea of harmony between man and nature in TCM also pursues the harmonious unity between man and nature and social environment. In order to realize the freedom of existence, an old friend must learn from Xiu De, respect life and take the initiative, and imitate the nature of heaven and earth. That is, the individuals creative practical activities are used to understand the cultivation of heaven and earth, so that its cultivation echoes the popularization of the universe; Through the empathy of the heart, as for the realm of the unity of things and me, the transcendence of individual spiritual realm can be improved.

The philosophy of TCM is based on Huangdi Neijing, which is the first of the four classics of TCM. The idea of the integration of man and nature and the integration of form and spirit contained in it is the main point of Chinas ancient philosophy of life. Although restricted by natural environmental conditions, its requirements for mental cultivation can be seen in embryonic form. Neijing Su Wen

Bao Quan Xing Lun says: After heaven and earth, all things are prepared, no more valuable than people. Man is born with the spirit of heaven and earth, and the law of four seasons is achieved. The king and the concubines are numerous, and they want their full form. This emphasizes the preciousness of human beings, which is far superior to all things. From the monarch to the common people, anyone is willing to preserve the health of the body. Here, health is a perfect state of body and mind, which depends on the Qi of heaven and earth and the essence of Shui Gu (one kind of dietary subtle substances) , and lives with the law of four seasons growth and collection, so as to achieve the realm of harmony between man and nature.

Confucianism believes that peoples moral behavior is based on mental cultivation, so it emphasizes the importance of mental cultivation in the process of moral cultivation (Wen, 2012). Confucianism developed to the stage of philosophy of mind in the Ming Dynasty, and the moral basis was pulled back to the inner experience from the transcendental moral laws in the Song Dynasty. Through the critical perspective of philosophy of mind in the Ming Dynasty on Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty and the anti-external authority of philosophy of mind in the Ming Dynasty on the basis of Confucian values, some ideological resources for building a new ritual law were explored (Yang, 2015). This changes the source of human value from nature is reason in Zhu Xis Neo-Confucianism to mental is reason, which realizes that people can grasp their own values based on their own mind, rather than on some external rational law, and emphasizes and promotes peoples subjective status, which is in line with the spirit of taking people as the main body in modern society, and also needs to emphasize peoples subjective will in mental cultivation.

Therefore, this study discusses the cultivation of mental on the basis of Confucianism in Ming Dynasty and Huangdi Neijing, a classic of TCM, which contains not only the connotation of mental cultivation, but also the specific requirements and certain forms of expression in the process of mind cultivation, so as to summarize the characteristics of mental cultivation relatively completely. To mold the mental cultivation of a new generation, that is, the level of personality self-realization, we must attach importance to the cultivation of humanistic spirit,

vigorously carry out the research and education of spiritual cultivation, and regard it as an important topic of ideological education in the whole long modernization process (Chen,1994). China is in the period of social transformation, and peoples moral concepts are undergoing profound changes. Moral vacuum, moral confusion, moral pluralism and moral suspension are common in peoples concepts (Zhu, 2010). In order to consolidate the level of China peoples mental cultivation, the self-made interview outline was used by the Ming Dynasty experts of psychology and TCM in Lingnan area, and the extended characteristics of mental cultivation were investigated in the form of interviews and online voice interviews, which made preliminary preparations for the development of the scale of mental cultivation.

## **2 Design**

### **2.1 Objective**

In order to consolidate the level of peoples spiritual cultivation in China, experts of philosophy of mind and TCM in the Ming Dynasty in Lingnan area were interviewed with a self-made interview outline to investigate the extended characteristics of spiritual cultivation in the form of interviews and online voice interviews, in order to make preliminary preparations for the development of the scale of mental cultivation accomplishment.

### **2.2 Interviewee inclusion criteria**

Based on grounded theory, according to the research objectives and interview contents, combined with the actual situation, experts in the two research directions of mind science and TCM in the Ming Dynasty were selected as the consulting objects. The selection criteria of experts are as follows:

Major in psychology and China philosophy, with at least 10 years of relevant research experience; Or major in Chinese medicine and psychosomatic medicine, with the qualification certificate of Chinese medicine practitioner and at least 5 years of clinical experience in Chinese medicine;

Have a doctorate or associate professor (or deputy chief physician) or above professional titles;

Understand the purpose of this study, and be able to cooperate actively and

completely to complete the interview.

### **2.3 Time and form of interview**

From September 2022 to March 2023, the interview forms include face-to-face interview and WeChat voice communication. Each of the interview time will not less than 30min.

### **2.3 Interview Outline**

Explain the interview objectives of this study and obtain informed consent about this interview. Introduce the connotation definition of mental cultivation to the interviewees. The interview outline contains three questions: First, ask the experts about mental cultivation and some related words. Second, the experts are required to summarize the characteristics and daily specific behaviors of people with high level of mental cultivation. Finally, ask the experts about the mental cultivation in their own lives.

### **2.4 Analysis tool**

The study will adopt the qualitative analysis software Nvivo20 to analyze the interview manuscripts.

## **3 Results**

### **3.1 Interviewee**

A total of 8 experts completed the interview, including 4 males and 4 females. Experts are 33-83 years old, with an average age of 54.3 years old; The expert fields are 4 experts in psychology and China philosophy, and 4 experts in TCM and psychosomatic medicine; The interview time ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes, with an average duration of 46 minutes and 17 seconds. The interview forms include 3 face-to-face interview and 5 WeChat voice communication.

### **3.2 Extensional Characteristics of Mental Cultivation**

According to the expert interviews and the preliminary research on the similarity between Neijing and the Ming Dynastys mind, the characteristics of mental cultivation are summarized, which are divided into five stages, namely, inner cultivation, less desire, firm will, pledge virtue and true happiness and each stage has its own characteristics. According to the research process from open coding to

selective coding, and then to theoretical coding, the basic structural system of mental cultivation characteristics is constructed.

The five stages are step by step, and also cross, influence and achieve each other. Among them, the inner cultivation refers to taking inner experience as the beginning of spiritual cultivation, paying attention to the importance of inner experience to spiritual cultivation, and shifting ones eyes from the external world to ones own mind. The inner view includes three aspects: self-examination, enriching knowledge and self-experience, and enhance self-awareness. Less desire means that after paying attention to the inner experience, you begin to get rid of the pursuit of the outside world, and gradually the secular desire of constantly demanding can also be reduced. Instead of completely cutting off the desire, you get rid of the unreasonable persistence and clear mind, which is a state of inner simplicity, including the requirements of reasonable expression of desire, indifference to fame and wealth and simple life. Firm will refers to a state of inner stability, not being disturbed by external things, and not worrying or afraid after examining selfish desires, and points out that mental cultivation should attach importance to the present, nourish feelings and be unflappable. After firm will step is to pledge virtue, we will step into the stage of establishing morality, and always do things with benevolence. It is required that those with high level of spiritual cultivation should have virtues such as Benevolence and kindness, justice, courtesy and honesty, responsibility, High ambition, unity of knowledge and action and achieve conscience. After several stages of crossing and influencing each other, virtue was established and finally reached the realm of true happiness. This is the happiness spontaneously generated by internal emotions. This kind of happiness is due to the establishment of the subjects moral personality, and the mind is free and has its own place, that is, it can be helping pleasure, have aesthetic pleasure, feel ordinary pleasure or derive pleasure from one-self. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1 Extensional Characteristics of Mental Cultivation

Theoretical coding	Selective coding	Reference point	Open coding (example)
Inner Cultivation	Self-examination	25	Know yourself; Introspection; Reflect on oneself three times a day; Think before go to bed; Have requirements for myself; Correct ones understanding
	Enrich knowledge and self-experience	15	Broaden the boundary of knowledge; Wisdom in hold, elegance in mold; Expand experience; Reading can improve yourself; Self-restraint through learning
	Enhance self-awareness	21	See problems from another perspective; Deal with behavior through rational thinking; Understanding; Have a mind; See problems from a broader perspective
Less Desire	Reasonable expression of desire	20	Juvenile abstinence; Abstain fighting in ones prime life; Quit gains and losses in ones old age ; Overcome some desires; Put desire in a moderate position.
	Indifferent fame and wealth	25	Low profile; Do not blindly compare; Indifferent to fame and fortune; Not eager for quick success and instant benefit
	Simple life	11	Reduce demand; Diligence and thrift; Simplicity; Abandon excessive demand; Life Zen mood
Firm Will	Attach importance to the present	16	Meditate; Yoga; Return to one-self; Seize the moment;
	Nourish feelings	25	Make delicious food; Raise flowers; Listen to soothing music; Jogging; Tourism; Play the piano;



Pledge Virtue	Be unflappable	23	Cure anger; Calm in case of trouble; Calm down; Equanimity; Control emotions; Blunt perception; Adjust your mentality;
	Benevolence and kindness	31	Do good deeds; Truth, goodness and beauty; Have benevolence; Have feelings; Have love; Compassion; The doctor is benevolent; The benevolent loves others
	Justice	18	Pick up morality rather than wealth; Loyalty; Stick to the bottom line; Dare to fight against the phenomenon of violating moral principles
	Courtesy and honesty	18	Politeness; Language civilization; Behave appropriately; Respect the old and love the young; True; Honesty and trustworthiness
	Responsibility	12	Improve working ability; Love work; Do your duty; Dare to be responsible
	High ambition	12	Have opinions; Have faith; Have feelings; Make a statement; Make meritorious service; Have a clear life goal; Four sentences in horizontal canal
	Knowledge-action unity	17	Match words with deeds; Realize the justice everywhere; The cultivation of the concept and behavior of moral character; Integrate knowledge with your daily life;
	Achieve conscience	27	Have a conscience; Moral integrity; Publicity of human nature; Human nature is good; Invent the original mind; Moral cultivation; High moral level; The awakening of moral nature; The distinction between man and bird lies in morality.

True Happiness	Helping pleasure	34	Caring for others; Have a clear understanding of the world; Gentle and courteous; Treat people equally; Help others; Treat people warmly; Self-denial and forgiveness for others; Self-cultivation and peace of mind
	Aesthetic pleasure	8	Self-expression of artistic emotion; Have aesthetic cultivation;
	Ordinary pleasure	8	Happiness lies in contentment; Grasp the little fortunate things in life; Strong subjective well-being; Spiritual abundance
	Derive pleasure from one-self	18	Self-satisfied; Open up ones own life path

3.3 Cognitive differences of extension characteristics in different professional directions

In order to explore the cognitive differences of experts in different professional directions on the extension characteristics of mental cultivation, firstly, according to the professional direction of the interview experts, each interview manuscript is classified into cases, with Chinese medicine experts manuscripts coded with Z and philosophy of mind experts manuscripts coded with X, and according to the attributes of different professional directions, the cases are classified into Chinese medicine majors and philosophy of mind majors respectively. Eight interview manuscript cases are combined with 20 selective coding nodes, and the relationship between reference points and selective coding in open coding for each expert is checked. See Figure 1 for the connection diagram of combined coding. The average number of connections between 5 interviews with TCM experts and selective coding is 10.4, and the average number of connections between 3 interviews with experts of philosophy of mind and selective coding is 15.3. The open codes of each manuscript are evenly distributed in the overall distribution of 20 optional codes.

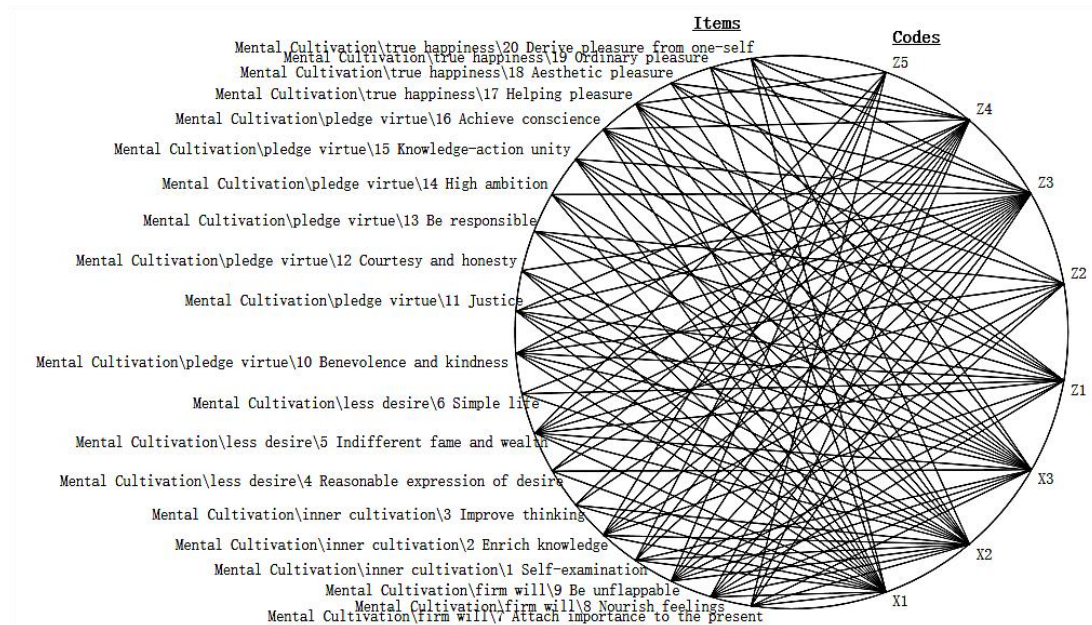


Figure 1 Connection diagram of Group Query of interview manuscript cases and selective coding

Explore the cognitive differences of mental cultivation characteristics in different professional directions, select the node of attribute classification and theoretical coding for matrix coding query, check the coding intersection between the extended characteristics of mental cultivation and different professional directions, and then draw the radar map of cognitive differences of mental cultivation characteristics in different professional directions according to the theoretical coding ratio of attributes in different professional directions, as shown in Figure 2.

The contents of expert reference points in the direction of TCM specialty are mostly distributed in the characteristics of firm will, less desire and true happiness; The contents of expert reference points in the direction of philosophy of mind are mostly distributed in the characteristics of pledge virtue and inner cultivation. The difference between the two major directions is the most obvious in the distribution of reference points of pledge virtue characteristics, experts in TCM accounted for 15.37% and experts in philosophy of mind accounted for 84.63%, followed by firm will, experts in TCM accounted for 15.38% and experts in philosophy of mind accounted for 84.62%.

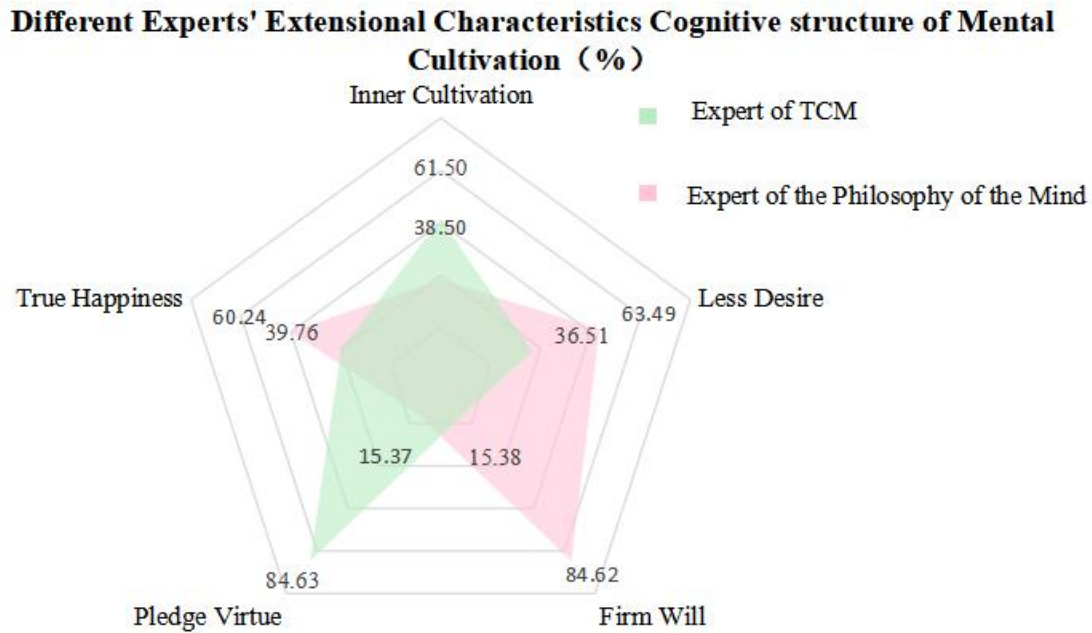


Figure 2 Different Experts Extensional Characteristics Cognitive structure of Mental Cultivation (%)

### 3.4 Analysis of the emotional tone of mind cultivation

The five core nodes embodied in the extension structure of mental cultivation are automatically coded. Positive emotional nodes are assigned to green, negative emotional nodes are assigned to red, the mixed tone nodes are assigned to orange and neutral tone nodes are assigned to gray. The five-stage coding emotion is dominated by neutral tone, with the overall neutral tone accounting for 67.1%, and the neutral tone inside the node accounting for more than 60%, among which the reference point of neutral tone inside pledge virtue accounts for the largest proportion, accounting for 79.5%; The overall proportion of reference points of positive and negative emotional tone is close, accounting for 12.4% and 11.7% respectively; The overall mixed tone reference point accounts for 8.9%.

There are some extreme situations in which the emotional tone is distributed inside the nodes: the negative tone reference points in the nodes of inner cultivation account for only 3.3%, and the supporting points in the view are mainly neutral and positive, and the negative reference points mostly belong to self-examination and self-criticism.(Such as: I save myself three times a day; Things that have not been criticized, reflected or thought about are not worth asking for and spending.). There

are 4.8% mixed tone reference points in the node of pledge virtue, and there are relatively few mixed tones for the emotional tone coding related to morality. Most of them have a clear positive or negative tone tendency or are neutral views, and the mixed tone reference points often contain both positive and negative views. (For example, peoples benevolence is lost. Without benevolence, the world will be in chaos, but people should have a kind of benevolence and care for each other. ). The reference point of positive tone in the node of less desire is 6.3%, and the description of desire restraint is mostly neutral or negative, while the reference point of positive tone is mostly based on the example of saints and great men or from the perspective of indifference to fame and wealth. (For example, Mencius said that people like Shun get up as soon as the cock crows and do good deeds tirelessly. When a rooster crows, we get up and clean the courtyard in the morning, which is industrious and kind, so we can also become sage.), as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Hierarchical diagram of emotional coding reference points (%)

4. Discussion

4.1 The development of mental cultivation

The study of mind and nature is mostly discussed from the category of China’s traditional philosophy, with the Confucian view of mind and nature as the

mainstream(Wang,2006). The theory of mind and nature is the most basic core of Confucianism, and other aspects of Confucianism are also the development and extension of the theory of mind and nature. Through the creation of Confucius and Mencius and the development and enrichment of Confucian scholars in past dynasties, Confucianism has become a huge ideological system concerned with the happiness of life and social harmony. The basic category of Confucian theory of mind and nature is the concepts of mind and nature, and the exploration of the thought of mind and nature began with Confucius(Huang,2009). Confucius said in The Analects of Confucius Yang Huo:Similar in nature, distant in habits,which initially involved the basic problems related to Mind, but they are not fully discussed. The focus of Confucius theory of mind and nature is loyalty and forgiveness and harmony with heaven and earth. The former is used to affirm self-mind and the latter is used to correct self-mind. In Mencius theory of mind, the theory of good nature is a great recognition of human nature, and advocates understanding ones mind from ones own psychological experience. In Mencius, he said: Be devoted, intellectual and know the sky. That is self-knowledge, self-consciousness, self-caution, introspection, recognizing the unity of mind and heaven, realizing heaven from humanity, realizing the principle of all things in the universe from observing the original mind, and advocating that peoples spiritual realm and the natural world can be opened up through self-cultivation and integration from the inside out. Mencius really put forward the theory of mind and nature in a systematic and detailed way, and at the same time opened a new stage of the development of Confucian thought of mind and nature. When Confucianism developed to the Neo-Confucianism stage in Song and Ming Dynasties, the theory of mind and nature absorbed a large number of Taoist thoughts and Buddhist mind-based thoughts of Laozi, such as 'Taoism is natural', 'inaction is self-improvement', and moved towards the road of constructing the Confucian universe and spiritual ontology. At this time, the theory of mind and nature contains the Confucian philosophical ontology integrating the moral ontology of mind and the theory of nature(Zhang,1998). Among them, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi put forward that 'nature' means 'justice' and 'the mind is the god of human beings, so those



who have all kinds of reasons should do everything', so 'mind' is different from 'nature'. When Confucianism developed to the stage of mind study in Ming Dynasty, Lu Jiuyuan advocated that 'mind means reason' and thought that 'mind' was no different from 'nature'. Wang Yangming gave a concrete explanation of 'mind nature'. He established a systematic monism system of mind nature, put forward a new viewpoint of unity of knowledge and action and conscience, and further promoted the theory of mind and body to the height of universe ontology, reaching the peak of China's ancient theory of mind nature. At the same time, it is pointed out that the heart is the master of the body, and everyone has an innate conscience. The conscience is the mind, and the master is justice and nature. Yang Ming believes that 'the heart is not only a mass of flesh and blood', so on one hand, the 'mind' it refers to should be a perceptual heart including perception, thinking, emotion and intention(Yang,1996). On the other hand, it is a moral conscience including the value orientation of good and evil(Duan,1997).

'Cultivation' refers to cultivating one's noble quality, correct attitude towards life or perfect code of conduct. Among them, 'Xiu' in Shuo Wen Jie Zi Zhu extended the meaning of 'removing its dirt is to repair'(Chen,2015). The formation and development of Confucian theory of mind and nature cultivation has roughly gone through three stages: the ideological and theoretical foundation of Confucius, Mencius and Xun and The Book of Rites, the inheritance, dissemination and maintenance of Confucian scholars in Han and Tang Dynasties, and the more theoretical and refined development of Confucianism in Song and Ming Dynasties. Different from Taoism and Buddhism, Confucianism stresses both 'mind' and 'achievement', both 'inner sage' (mental cultivation) and 'outer king' (political achievement). The Confucian theory of mind cultivation has an idealistic tendency to exaggerate the spiritual function, and it is reasonable to expose and criticize this theoretical deviation. However, the Confucian theory of mind cultivation also develops the positive aspects of self-awareness, that is, guiding people to actively deal with external influences in the field of moral and spiritual life and attaching importance to the influence of correct concepts and moral concepts. At the same time,

it pays attention to spiritual cultivation, which is also the most concentrated expression or the most important representation of moral self-discipline and moral consciousness.

#### **4.2 The connotation definition of mental cultivation**

On the basis of Confucianism in the Ming Dynasty and the classic Huangdi Neijing, this study discusses the cultivation of mind, and makes the following connotation definition: 'Mind cultivation' refers to a psychological state that people's spirit, consciousness, thinking, emotional activities and morality have undergone a development process through continuous discovery of inner thoughts, introspection and continuous transformation of moral behavior.

'Mind' is a combination of mind and nature, which are categories. Mind is thought, nature refers to human nature, and mind is the inner spiritual quality formed by the combination of human spirit, consciousness, emotion, thinking activities and morality. 'Self-cultivation' refers to the process of cultivating moral quality or perfecting behavior norms, 'cultivation' refers to the process of self-recovery and perfection through rectification, and 'cultivation' refers to the meaning of nourishing body and mind through education and training so as to make them grow up.

The Mind Theory of Ming Dynasty began with the establishment of Baisha Mind Theory by Chen Baisha. After the perfection and development of his disciple Zhan Ganquan, it was called Ganquan's theory of mind, which had a profound influence on Wang Yangming. Wang Yangming's collection of Lu Jiuyuan's Mind Theory and Chen Zhan's Mind Theory is now Yangming's Mind Theory. In Ming Dynasty, the development of Mind Theory was roughly divided into three stages, from Baisha Mind Theory to Ganquan Mind Theory and then to Yangming Mind Theory, which formed two academic pearls of Chen Zhan's Mind Theory and Yangming Mind Theory, and they were closely related.

Chen Zhan's theory of mind holds that 'mind' is the noumenon, and gives the concept of mind a clear meaning of 'integration into one'(Huang,2018). This emphasizes that the heart of ontological meaning and the heart of ethical meaning are two sides of a whole. The heart of ontological meaning rests on the universe as a



whole, while the heart of ethical meaning pays attention to the individual's subjective cognitive ability, and develops the ideal state of self-cultivation to reassure others. In this process, what is experienced is the projection of ethical feelings, which is further sublimated to the highest level of morality, that is, the aesthetic realm of super morality(Huang,2019). Zhan Ganquan's theory of 'recognizing the natural principles everywhere' expresses the self-cultivation method of Baisha's mind more completely and accurately. Self-cultivation is not limited by time and space, dynamic or static mode, and 'meditation' is only a way of self-cultivation, so he puts forward 'recognizing everywhere' to perfect Baisha's theory of 'meditation'. He believes that 'the so-called people who know the natural principles everywhere, with the hair has not been sent, with the static follow-up.'(Huang,2015). In essence, the concept of 'understanding the natural principles everywhere' here is a self-cultivation process of constantly discovering and self-cultivating everything, observing and introspection.

Wang Yangming's theory of mind originated from Lu Jiuyuan's theory, which holds that 'mind' is the origin of all things and advocates the theory of 'to conscience'. In Xi Chuan Lu, he said, 'If you want to cultivate yourself, you should cultivate your mind first.'. 'Mind' is the origin of all things, and it is also the master that restricts all things. The master is justice and nature, which is no different from the 'mind' and 'nature' in Lu Jiuyuan's theory of mind. Yangming also moved the 'Tian Li(the order of nature)' advocated by Zhu Xi into people's mind, which existed in people's mind, so 'Ren Xin(people's inner thoughts)' was equivalent to 'Tian Li' and paid full attention to it, that is, people's subjective consciousness was highly affirmed. This is similar to the full affirmation of human value in Huangdi Neijing, which points out that people are positive about their own lives from the attitude towards life. For example, Huangdi Neijing said: Everything between heaven and earth is available, but nothing is more precious than people. Highly emphasized the value of people. The 'mind' that Yangming refers to is the perceptual heart and moral conscience, including the value orientation of good and evil in perception, thinking, emotion, will and morality, which has something in common with the narrow sense of God, in which the heart governs the mind and hides the spirit. Mind governs consciousness, a generalized god who

dominates human life activities and its external manifestations; The spirit, consciousness, thinking, emotional activities and other narrow gods of the master. Therefore, 'mind' is the inner spiritual quality formed by the combination of spirit, consciousness, thinking and emotional activities and morality. Therefore, the connotation of 'mental cultivation' is a psychological state that one's own spirit, consciousness, thinking, emotional activities and morality have experienced the development process of constantly discovering inner thoughts, introspection and observation, and constantly transforming moral behavior.

#### **4.3 The extended definition of mental cultivation**

The general development sequence of the five stages of mental cultivation is gradual. Among them, the concept of inner cultivation refers to taking inner experience as the beginning of mental cultivation, paying attention to the importance of inner experience to mental cultivation, and changing ones eyes from the external world to ones mind. The concept of inner cultivation includes three aspects: self-examination, enriching knowledge and self-experience, and enhancing self-awareness. Less desire means that after paying attention to the inner experience, you begin to get rid of the pursuit of the outside world, and gradually the secular desire of constantly demanding can also be reduced. Instead of completely cutting off the desire, you get rid of the unreasonable persistence and clear mind, which is a state of inner simplicity, including the requirements of reasonable expression of desire, indifference to fame and wealth and simple life. Firm will means to a state of inner stability, not being disturbed by external things, and not worrying or afraid after examining selfish desires, and points out that spiritual cultivation should attach importance to the present, nourish feelings and be unflappable. After firm will step is to pledge virtue, we will step into the stage of establishing morality, and always do things with benevolence. It is required that those with high level of spiritual cultivation should have virtues such as Benevolence and kindness, justice, courtesy and honesty, responsibility, High ambition, unity of knowledge and action and achieve conscience. After the first three stages of development, virtue was established and finally reached the realm of true happiness. This is the happiness spontaneously

generated by internal emotions. This kind of happiness is due to the establishment of the subjects moral personality, and the mind is free and has its own place, that is, it can be helping pleasure, have aesthetic pleasure, feel ordinary pleasure or derive pleasure from one-self, as shown in Figure 4.

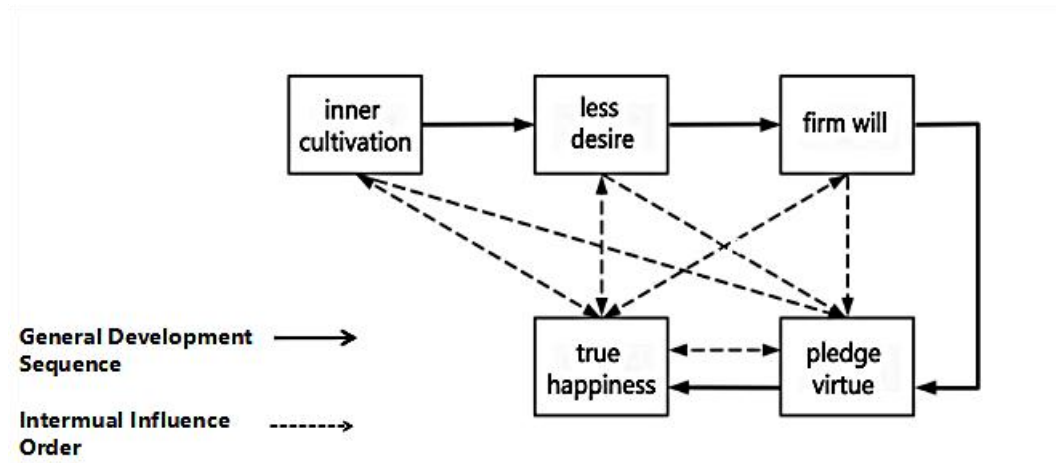


Figure 4 Relationship between Extrinsic Traits of Mental Cultivation

## Conclusion

In the five stages of mental cultivation, which are inner cultivation, less desire, firm will, pledge virtue and true happiness is generally step by step, and there are certain internal crossover and mutual influence. Among them, inner cultivation, less desire and firm will have an impact on the development of the stage of pledge virtue, while the formation of the stage of true happiness is influenced by the development of the first four stages, which can in turn affect the psychological cultivation characteristics of each stage.

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